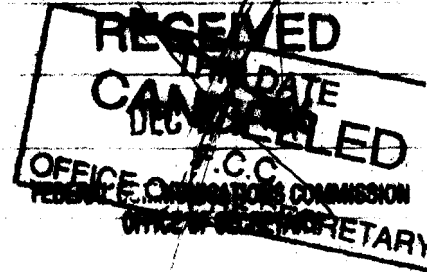


THE HONORABLE Reed HUNT  
CHAIRMAN  
Federal COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
1919 M STREET NW, ROOM 814  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554  
RE: CC DOCKET NO. 96-45



Dear Chairman Hunt:

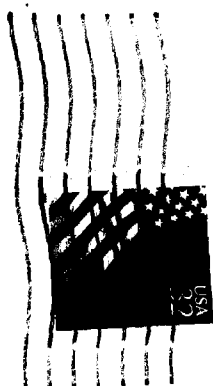
I am Vice President of The Sugar  
Loaf Union Free School in Sugar Loaf  
New York, and I would like to thank you  
for your leadership and the leadership of  
the Joint Board for their strong decision  
to ensure that all schools will have  
affordable access to the information superhighway.  
I urge the FCC to fully adopt the  
recommendations of the Joint Board.

I was superintendent of Sugar  
Loaf from 1973 - 1981 and in 1980  
introduced computers into our curriculum.  
We hope you will help us to  
continue to expand our program.  
Thank You

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H. Malcolm Stewart  
VICE PRESIDENT SUGAR LOAF BOE

Lt. Col. H. M. Stewart  
Box 407  
Goshen, NY 10924-0407



The Honorable Reed Hundt  
F.C.C.  
1919 M Street NW. Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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December 16, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554



RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt:

The passage of the "Telecommunications Act of 1996" marks a new age of educational opportunity for schoolchildren across the nation. On behalf of the 1,500 members of the Oregon School Boards Association, I would like to thank you for your leadership in ensuring that all schools will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

We support maximum flexibility that will empower schools to select the services that work best for their educational mission. The inclusion of discounts on internal connections and Internet access is equally vital and stands to bring services directly to the classroom where students learn.

Many of our schools in Oregon are already making huge investments in technology. Oregon has numerous school districts that are located in rural areas. Affordable access to technology in all classrooms is crucial in leveling the playing field for these areas. Access to affordable and locally chosen telecommunications services, whether it be in the suburbs, the inner-cities, remote towns or in rural areas is essential to help all children perform better at school and achieve a brighter future.

The Act will help districts across the nation to continue a long-standing American tradition of providing free quality education to all students. This program will help provide technology to improve the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of the educational system.

As you move ahead in your deliberation on this important issue, I urge you to seize this opportunity to assist us in bringing 21st century learning to students in our state and across the nation.

Sincerely,

Fallie Calder  
Legislative Advocate

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The Honorable Reed Hundt  
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# State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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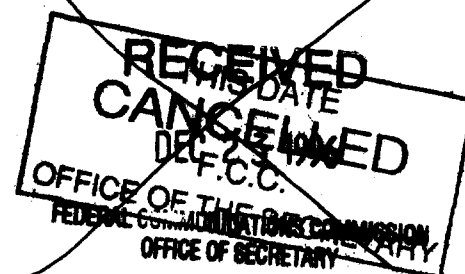
John T. Benson  
State Superintendent

Steven B. Dold  
Deputy State Superintendent

December 11, 1996

Office of the Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Room 222  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554.

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**RE: CC Docket No. 96-45.**

Dear Commissioners:

As state superintendent I applaud the actions of the Federal-State Joint Board in recommending telecommunication rate support for our schools and public libraries as required by Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (PL104-104). The discounts will be a critical factor in insuring that our schools and libraries have the networking connectivity they need to help meet the challenges of the Information Age.

The Joint Board's decision to recommend that schools and libraries be allowed maximum flexibility to purchase whatever telecommunications services will meet their needs is a step in the right direction. Furthermore, I am pleased to see that the Joint Board has rejected the narrow interpretation that discounts only be applied to narrow "core" of telecommunication services or a set package of services. Schools and libraries should, as the Joint Board notes, be able to apply appropriate discounts to whatever telecommunication services best meets their needs. With the rapid pace of technological change the whole concept of "core" services or prepackaged services is out dated.

More specifically, I have made several suggestions below based on requested input from the Commission. The Commission asks for input on the following issues as part of its *PUBLIC NOTICE* [DA 96 1891] released on November 18, 1996

*Principles. How should the additional principle of competitive neutrality be defined and applied within the context of universal service?*

Any telecommunications services available commercially by tariff or through contract should be available to libraries and schools at the proposed discounts. Schools and libraries should have the ability to contract with a telecommunication provider that will give them the best value for the requested service. To promote competitive neutrality the Commission should move as soon as possible to open intrastate competition to any provider including entities

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which have not traditionally been viewed as telecommunication providers like cable carriers and electric utilities.

*Schools/Libraries. What methods should the Commission use for identifying high cost areas for purposes of providing a greater discount to schools and libraries located in high cost areas? What measures of economic advantage may be readily available to identify economically disadvantaged non-public schools and economically disadvantaged libraries or, if none is readily available, what information could be required that would be minimally burdensome?*

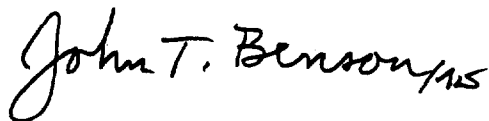
High cost areas are most often associated with smaller communities in rural areas. In addressing this, I suggest the Commission review census or school district data showing what percentage of a school district's student population comes from outside a municipality greater than 50,000 population. A similar type of measurement can be used for public libraries. That is, how many public libraries are in municipalities under 50,000 population. To eliminate school districts or libraries communities that are in smaller suburban, the Commission can look at an actual mileage figure. For example, in addition to the above criteria, it can further define high costs areas as being at least 10 miles from a municipality greater than 50,000 population.

For economically disadvantaged areas, I endorse the Joint Board's suggestion to look at the percentage of students eligible for subsidized lunches under the Title I program. For public libraries using both a measurement of per capita income and the level of per capita assessed evaluation of their service area will give a good indication of what libraries are located in economically depressed municipalities.

Finally, I would like to comment on section X. *SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES E. Restrictions Imposed on Schools and Libraries.* I strongly endorse allowing consortia of schools and libraries to be eligible for the rate discounts. Many schools in Wisconsin are part of distance education networks and libraries are part of consortia offering computerized library systems. Allowing consortia to be eligible will make it easier for these groups to serve their constituents and also ease any burden that smaller schools and libraries may confront as they review the procedures and processes they must follow to take advantage of the reduced rates.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the recommendations from the Federal-State Joint Board. I look forward to the final rules when they are issued in May 1997.

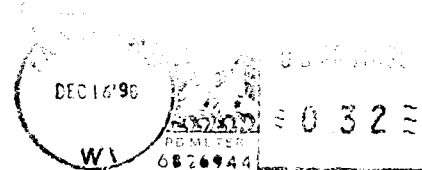
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John T. Benson". To the right of the signature, there is a small handwritten number "115".

John T. Benson  
State Superintendent



Department of Public Instruction  
125 South Webster Street  
P. O. Box 7841  
Madison WI 53707-7841



The Honorable Reed E. Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
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